



**Marin County Division of Social Services  
Children and Family Services  
Disaster Response Plan  
December 01, 2008**

## CWS Disaster Response Criteria

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**Children and Family Services  
Disaster Response Plan  
Marin County Division of Social Services**

In alignment with our mission Marin County Children and Family Services is dedicated to ensure the safety, protection and health of children in the event of a disaster. This document is prepared in an effort to aid staff in maintaining personal safety of those we serve, and to provide communication and continuity of services in the event of a disaster. Our objectives are to:

- Locate and continue services to all foster children in our agencies care and to provide response to the most vulnerable clients, including the medically fragile, disabled and severely emotionally disturbed children
- Ensure the safety and well-being of unaccompanied minors until they are connected with their parents or other family members
- Preserve essential client records
- Respond as appropriate to new child welfare referrals
- Support Health and Human Services county-wide disaster response roles

This plan follows the template provided by the California Department of Social Services and meets all of the Federal requirements enumerated in Section 6 (a)(16) of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006.

***Criteria A: Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster.***

**1. Identification and location process of children who may be displaced**

*Stage 1 Activation Procedure*

Currently Marin County has a phone tree system in place to activate emergency response assistance for children in care. We are in the process of establishing an emergency alert and communication system CAHAN, California Health Alert Network. The California Health Alert Network is the State of California's web-based information and communications system. Alerts and notifications are received via alphanumeric pagers, e-mail, fax and phone.

For a disaster that occurs **during business hours**, all staff are expected to immediately report to their supervisor or the available next higher ranking manager. Some CFS staff members may be released from duty to check on their families. For a disaster that occurs during **non-business hours**, CFS managers and supervisors will activate the phone trees.

*Stage 2 Identification and Notification Process*

Five senior staff members form part of a core group will implement the plan in locations assigned to them. Senior staff members will then notify staff workers and assign to the appropriate areas where assistance is most needed.

*Stage 3 Identification and Location of Children*

A dual plan of identification and location will run concurrently. Care providers of children in care are responsible for contacting the emergency Operations Center to notify center operators of the children's status if not already contacted by CFS staff.

In the event that identification is not possible the Designated Manager will work closely with the EOC disaster response team to verify location and status of children unaccounted for.

**2. Communication process with foster care providers**

Prior to an emergency all providers will be required to provide at least three locations which they might seek refuge in an emergency. They must provide the name, address, and phone number of a contact person at each location. This information will be updated annually as part of their "Emergency Plans". Providers will also be given emergency contact information. This information will be updated as required.

If a provider is relocating to one of the emergency locations listed or to an alternative location, they have up to 72 hours to contact CFS, and otherwise they must contact the Division immediately.

- a. When the provider does make contact with the Division, the provider must provide the name(s) of the child(ren) in care with their DOB and their current location.

- b. Anytime the provider changes locations or a child leaves their care, they must contact CFS immediately.

All care providers will be contacted as part of the activation of the plan. All care providers are expected to have an Emergency Plan which is updated annually.

Care providers are expected to contact their worker/manager where possible or the Emergency Operations Center and provide details of their location, status of the children in their care and plans.

### **3. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event known in advance**

Evacuation Procedures are outlined in the County Emergency Management Plan.

All employees are provided with information on evacuation procedures. As part of evacuation procedures the designated manager will ensure each member of the management team has an "Emergency Pack". This pack contains contact information and details on children, staff, care providers and parents/relatives.

The designated CFS lead will form part of the Emergency management team and will be stationed at the Emergency Operations Center.

Staff and care providers should follow the directives of local public safety authorities concerning evacuation.

- a. Monitor these radio stations for emergency information from fire, police and emergency management agencies (providers are encouraged to maintain battery operated weather band radios and replacement batteries. They can be purchased at stores that sell electronics. Most run on batteries or have battery back-up.)
- b. If an evacuation is ordered, proceed to one of the emergency contacts provided to CFS or to a designated shelter announced by the authorities.
- c. Providers should keep the child's placements packet updated and in an easily accessible place. The placement packet must be taken when evacuating.

The placement packet should also include:

1. Emergency card which would include the names and numbers of the three emergency locations provided to DFS (the forms will be printed in triplicate)
2. Insurance card/Medicaid Card
3. Birth certificate
4. Social Security card
5. Transfer sheet (current medication list)
6. First aid kits should be maintained at all times.

**4. Identification of evacuation procedures - Event known in advance**

All agency buildings will be assessed for structural integrity following an event.

Staff and care providers are advised to follow local public authority with regard to evacuation and be prepared in the event of an evacuation.

**5. Identification of shelters**

The county maintains a list of designated shelter sites and will activate these sites if deemed secure in the event of an emergency.

Care providers are advised to stay tuned to local announcements. CFS staff are designated shelter and care workers in the event of a disaster. Shelters will accommodate unaccompanied children as part of shelter responsibilities, and notify CFS immediately upon identification of unaccompanied minors.

**6. Parental notification procedures**

If birth parents contact CFS, they will be informed regarding the status of their children. Every effort will be made to contact birth parents however in the initial stages of emergency response the focus will be on providing essential services and locating children. The details of all children in care will be provided as soon as is reasonably possible.

A toll free number will be made available as part of the Countywide emergency response efforts.

**7. Alternative processes for providing continued services**

Following a disaster the CFS Director/Lead will communicate with the Division Director regarding plans for emergency operations within the area. The Division Director will determine which continued services are necessary and provide them as possible.

After a disaster has been declared, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) will activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in San Rafael. All pre-designated first responders representing all county agencies are immediately dispatched to the EOC (this includes the CFS lead). All services are coordinated from the county EOC in San Rafael.

**8. Staff assignment process**

Staff are designated disaster workers and will be assigned duties via coordinated efforts of OES.

**9. Workload Planning**

The Designated CFS lead will work with the Division Director and Office of Emergency Services to plan work assignments and the continuation of services. Planning will be dependent on disaster conditions.

**10. Alternative locations for operations**

Alternative locations will be decided by the Office of Emergency Services.

**11. Orientation and ongoing training**

All foster care providers are provided with training. Staff are trained as disaster shelter workers.

***Criteria B: Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases***

**1. New child welfare investigation process**

New reports of child abuse and neglect will take precedence over working in a shelter. The CFS Lead will make arrangements to relieve investigators of shelter duties so that investigations can be completed.

CFS Lead will consult with the Division Director (or designee) with regard to the need for additional staff on a temporary basis.

If local communications are disrupted a toll free number will be available to take reports and pass that information back to a worker at the local level or to law enforcement. This process will continue until local communications are reliable again.

**2. Implementation process for providing new services**

Implementation of new services is dependent on the location of staff and whether staff are needed to provide essential disaster services. New abuse and neglect cases will be managed as per the protocol above and further services will be determined by the conditions and plans set out by the OES and Division Director.

Where by there is a need to provide housing for displaced children or children who must be placed in protective custody the location of a temporary foster home or a shelter will be arranged.

***Criteria C: Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster***

**1. Communication structure – staff**

Once the emergency operations plan is activated the phone tree will be activated immediately or Emergency Communication System through CAHAN. If staff can not be reached in person, managers will leave a message and call the next person on the list. If phone service is interrupted or inoperable, managers will try cellular or pay phones if available. If no essential line of communication is available CFS will establish runner for dissemination of information. If all attempts fail in contacting the Social Services Agency, then Agency Personnel at the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) should be contacted. All County employee are designated "Disaster Workers", have been trained on disaster response communication.

**2. Communication structure – child welfare personnel (phone tree)**

See above

**3. Communication structure – contracted services**

All the contractor's will be notified through an e-mail distribution process in the event of an emergency. If internet access is not available, CFS will work with Contracts to contact essential contractors by telephone or in person as indicated.

**4. Communication process when all normal channels are unavailable**

In the event of an emergency or disaster situation staff will be instructed to turn their radios to any of the following list of radio stations who will be broadcasting emergency information to and for the General Public.

KWMR – FM band 90.5 or 87.7

KQED – FM band – 88.5

KCBS – AM band – 740

KGO – AM band 810

**5. Communication frequency**

Staff will be apprised daily with updates and more frequently as circumstances indicate.

**6. Communication with media**

Media communications will be handled by Social Services Division Manager



**7. Communication with volunteers**

Communications with volunteers will be coordinated by Emergency Operations Center. (EOC)

**8. Establishment of a toll-free number prior to disaster (include TTY)**

Establishment of a toll-free is in the process of being established through CAHAN.

**Criteria D: *Preserve essential program records*****1. Record preservation process**

CFS's essential program records are primarily stored in the statewide database Child Welfare System Case Management System, otherwise known as CWS/CMS. The CWS/CMS server maintenance is managed by the State's vendor, IBM Global Services. IBM is contractually bound to the State to provide extensive Disaster Recovery services in the event of emergencies. The services include, but are not limited to, providing access to Marin County data from Sacramento or, if necessary, another County welfare office.

**2. Use of off-site back-up system**

Social Service Division Director (located at a different location than CFS) will maintain a hard copy list of the children in care. This list will include the children who are medically-at-risk and those who are in need of medication regularly.

Caseload Listing Reports are available from CWS/CMS and CFS supervisors maintain hard copies on a regular basis to monitor pending cases.

Closed case files are stored in the CFS clerical area. Active case files are stored at each social worker's desk and are on-line with CWS/CMS.

**Criteria E: *Coordinate services and share information with other states*****1. Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children reporting process**

Senior Manager in Children and Family Services will lead communication with ICPC coordinators.

**2. Mental health providers**

Contact with local Mental Health providers will be coordinated through CFS management and Marin County Community Mental Health/ both agencies are under the umbrella of Marin County Health and Human Services.

**3. Courts**

Communication with Marin County Courts will be coordinated by CFS Senior Manager/County Counsel and Court Officer

**4. Federal partners**

Coordination with Federal Partners will be managed by Division Director.

**5. CDSS**

Coordination with State Partners will be managed by Division Director.

**6. Tribes**

Marin County has no registered tribes.

**7. Volunteers**

Marin County Volunteer coordinator will manage volunteer communication and deployment

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